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## THE KOURETES AND ZEUS KOUROS.

A STUDY IN PRE-HISTORIC SOCIOLOGY.

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Ἰώ, μέγιστε Κοῦρε, χαῖρέ μοι,  
Κρόνιε.

THE opening words of the Hymn to Diktaean Zeus recently found at Palaikastro<sup>1</sup> instantly arrest attention. Zeus the Father of Gods and Men is invoked by a title that to our unaccustomed ears sounds strange and barely reverent.

‘Greatest of Kouroi, I give thee hail, Kronian.’

The Hymn of Invocation<sup>2</sup> is chanted by armed dancers who follow the god as *δαίμονες* or attendant spirits; they come to a stand about the well-fenced altar and there chant how at Dikte once the Kouretes took the holy child ‘on their shields from Rhea and with noise of beating feet hid him away.’<sup>3</sup> The armed dancers, it is clear, are in some sense Kouretes themselves and as such they invoke the Kouros. It may be that if we can understand the Kouretes, the gist of the Kouros will become clear. We begin, therefore, with the preliminary question:—

*Who were the Kouretes?*

καὶ Κουρήτων  
Βάκχος ἐκλήθη ὁσιωθεὶς.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 339 ff.

<sup>2</sup> ὕμνος κλητικός. Ritual Hymns of this or indeed of any class are unhappily rare. Our earliest instance is the invocation of the Bull-god by the women of Elis; the Delphic Paean to *Dithyrambos* presents a later and closer analogy, see my *Prolegomena*, pp. 438 and 417. To the question of these ὕμνοι κλητικοί and their connection with the Dithyramb and choruses of *δαίμονες* I hope to return later.

<sup>3</sup> See Prof. Gilbert Murray’s restored text (pp. 357 f.).

The question before us puzzled Strabo, and Lobeck in his great *Aglaophamus* failed to solve it. In both cases the reason is the same. Strabo had necessarily lost and Lobeck not yet recovered touch with the social conditions and the primitive habits of thought, out of which arose the institution of the Kouretes.

In one of the fragments of Book vii. Strabo<sup>1</sup> says, 'Many assert that the gods worshipped in Samothrace as well as the Kurbantes and the Korybantes and in like manner the Kouretes and the Idaean Daktyls, are the same as the Kabeiroi, but as to the Kabeiroi they are unable to tell who they are.' Not a very illuminating statement, but it just serves to show two things: first, that in Strabo's time even a learned man was in complete doubt as to the exact nature of the Kouretes; second, that in current opinion, Satyrs, Kouretes, Idaean Daktyls, Korybantes, and Kabeiroi appeared as figures roughly analogous.

Strabo devotes the third chapter of his tenth Book<sup>2</sup> to the discussion of our question, *Who were the Kouretes?* His discussion is intelligent and even acute. He could not solve the problem—the necessary anthropological data were wholly lacking—but he approached as nearly to a solution as was possible for an inquirer of his date.

Strabo apologizes for devoting to matters *quasi*-religious space that should have been dedicated to serious geography, and, by way of explanation, he adds that the sort of discussion he is about to engage in being of a theological nature is 'not alien to the inquiry of the philosopher.'<sup>3</sup> Strabo knew, what we too often forget, that theology is the primitive stuff out of which ancient philosophy was made.

Strabo's results must be briefly resumed:—

I omit his long geographical discussion as to the Aetolian and Akarnanian Kouretes. The only point that need here be noted is his opening statement that some said the Kouretes of Aetolia and Akarnania came from Crete.<sup>4</sup> Our problem is not concerned with the geographical

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 51. "Οτι τοὺς ἐν τῇ Σαμοθράκῃ τιμωμένους θεοὺς εἰρήκασι πολλοὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς τοῖς Καβείροις, οὐδ' αὐτοὺς ἔχοντες λέγειν τοὺς Καβείρους οὔτινές εἰσι, καθάπερ τοὺς Κύρβαντας καὶ Κορύβαντας, ὡς δ' αὖτως Κουρήτας καὶ Ἰδαίους Δακτύλους.

<sup>2</sup> E. Bethe (*Hermes*, xxiv. 1889, p. 411) has shown that in all probability the source for Strabo's account as well as that of Diodorus (v. 64. 65) is the *κατάλογος νεῶν* of Apollodorus, see Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopædie*, s.v. Daktyloi.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, x. c. 466. ἔστι μὲν οὖν θεολογικὸς πᾶς ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος τῆς ἐπισκέψεως καὶ οὐκ ἀλλότριος τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου θεωρίας.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, x. c. 462. . . . καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐκ Κρήτης, τῶν δ' ἐξ Εὐβοίας τὸ γένος εἶναι φασκόντων.

tribe of the Kouretes. The form *Κούρης* is simply what may be called a specialized derivative of *κούρος*, as *γυμνής* of *γυμνός* and perhaps *γόης* of *γός*. The Kouretes are Young Men in a special sense; any tribe anywhere might come to bear the name and undoubtedly such a tribe existed in Akarnania. Moreover, as Strabo himself notes, Homer<sup>1</sup> applies the term *Kouretes* just to ordinary young soldiers, the flower of the army. Agamemnon bids Odysseus choose out 'Kouretes, the bravest of the Achaeans' to bear the presents to Achilles.

What puzzled Strabo was not this normal use of the word but the fact that in certain writings called *Κουρητικά* and *περὶ Κουρήτων*<sup>2</sup> particular Kouretes were described, who were not merely a local tribe but a class of beings marked out by certain singular and apparently incompatible characteristics. These characteristics he enumerates as follows. For clearness' sake I do not follow Strabo's order.

#### I.—*The Kouretes as Δαίμονες and Πρόπολοι.*

The name Kouretes is applied by those who hand down Cretan and Phrygian traditions<sup>3</sup> to certain beings, who are not merely young men but who are *δαίμονες* and also *attendants* (*πρόπολοι*) on the gods. This particular kind of Kouretes resembles Satyrs, Seilenoi, Bacchoi, and Tityroi.<sup>4</sup> They are divine but not quite gods; they are, as we shall see, the stuff of which ancient gods are made. According to some, the Korybantes, the Idaean Daktyls, the Telchines are actually the same as the Kouretes. Others say that they are all akin but that there are slight differences. To characterize them generally, they are one and all enthusiastic beings inspired with Bacchic frenzy. Hesiod,<sup>5</sup> and Hesiod only, calls the Kouretes actually gods, he tells of

. . . 'the worthless idle race of Satyrs  
And the gods, Kouretes, lovers of sport and dancing.'

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, xix. 193. κρινάμενος κούρητας ἀριστῆας Παναχαιῶν.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, x. c. 466. ἅπερ Κουρητικά μὲν καὶ περὶ Κουρήτων λέγεται.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, x. c. 466. τοιοῦτους γὰρ τινὰς δαίμονας ἢ προπόλους θεῶν τοὺς Κουρητάς φασιν οἱ παραδόντες τὰ Κρητικά καὶ τὰ Φρύγια.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.* ἔοικε δὲ μᾶλλον τῷ περὶ Σατύρων καὶ Σειληνῶν καὶ Βακχῶν καὶ Τιτύρων λόγῳ.

<sup>5</sup> *Frags.* cxxix. καὶ γένος οὐτιδανῶν Σατύρων καὶ ἀμηχανοεργῶν  
Κουρητῆς τε Θεοὶ φιλοπαίγμονες, ὀρχηστῆρε.

II.—*The Kouretes as Magicians, as Μάντεις and Metallurgists.*

As δαίμονες whether wholly or half divine they *have all manner of magical capacities*. These capacities are by Strabo rather implied than expressly stated and are especially noticeable in the Korybantes. The Korybantes bind and release men from spells, they induce madness and heal it. The chorus asks <sup>1</sup> the love-sick Phaedra

‘Is this some Spirit, O child of man?  
Doth Hecat hold thee perchance, or Pan?  
Doth She of the Mountains work her ban,  
Or the dread Corybantes bind thee?’

The passage is noteworthy because it brings the Korybantes into relation with the Mountain-Mother and with Hecate, a conjunction to be discussed later (p. 322).

The Kouretes are also, as all primitive magicians are, seers (μάντεις). When Minos in Crete lost his son Glaukos he sent for the Kouretes to discover where the child was hidden.<sup>2</sup> Closely akin to this magical aspect is the fact that they are metal-workers.<sup>3</sup> Among primitive people metallurgy is always regarded as an uncanny craft. The metal-working side of these figures comes out only in the Daktyloi and the Telchines. A step more and they become culture-Heroes, inventors of all the arts of life, house-building, bee-keeping, shield-making, and the like.<sup>4</sup>

III.—*The Kouretes as armed Ὀρχηστῆρες.*

The most salient and also, to our minds, the most singular characteristic of these magical δαίμονες, these half-divine medicine men, these seers and metal-workers, is that they are *armed and orgiastic dancers*. The

<sup>1</sup> Eur. *Hipp.* 141.

ἡ σύ γ' ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα,  
εἴτ' ἐκ Πανὸς εἶθ' Ἑκάτας  
ἡ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων φοι-  
τῆς ἡ ματρὸς ὀρείας;

The translations here and elsewhere are by Professor Gilbert Murray.

<sup>2</sup> Apollod. 3. 2. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Soph. *ap.* Strabo, x. c. 473 says of the Idaean Daktyls, οἱ σίδηρόν τε ἐξεύρον καὶ εἰργάσαντο πρῶτοι καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τῶν πρὸς τὸν βίον χρησίμων.

<sup>4</sup> Diod. Sic. v. 64. Idaean Daktyls are described as γόητες who superintend ἐμφθὰς καὶ τελετὰς καὶ μυστήρια. They invent fire and the use of bronze and iron. The Kouretes are ἀρχηγοὶ τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινῆς ὁμιλίας καὶ συμβιώσεως.

Kouretes, says Strabo,<sup>1</sup> are certain youths who execute movements in armour. It is especially as armed and orgiastic dancers that they fulfil their function as ministers in sacred rites. They inspire terror by armed dances accompanied by noise and hubbub of timbrels and clashing arms and also by the sound of the flute and shouting.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV.—*The Kouretes as Φύλακες and Παιδοτρόφοι.*

In close connection with their function as armed dancers (ὄρχηστές) is another function which at first sight seems hardly congruous: the Kouretes are *guardians* (φύλακες), *nurses* (τροφεῖς), *child-rearers* (παιδοτρόφοι). 'In the Cretan discourses,' says Strabo,<sup>3</sup> 'the Kouretes are called the nurses and guardians of Zeus.' And again in trying to explain the word Kouretes, he says<sup>4</sup> they were so called either because they were young and boys or because of their rearing of Zeus. They earned this title, he adds, through being 'as it were Satyrs attendant upon Zeus.' Among the mystic and other rites in which the Kouretes take a part as ministers Strabo<sup>5</sup> expressly mentions, on the authority of Cretan tradition, the *παιδοτροφία* of Zeus and the orgiastic rites of the mother. Mother and child are of course correlatives. The principal myth in which the Kouretes figure as ministers is the story of the child-rearing.

The myth and its ritual enactment is recounted by Strabo<sup>6</sup> as follows. After mentioning the mysteries of Demeter and Dionysos, he says 'These things in general and the sacred ceremonies of Zeus in particular, are performed with orgiastic rites and with the assistance of attendants (πρόπολοι) similar to the Satyrs that attend Dionysos. These attendants they call Kouretes. They are certain young men who perform armed movements

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, x. c. 468. τούτους δ' ὠνόμαζον Κουρήτας, νέους τινὰς ἐνόπλιον κίνησιν μετ' ὀρχήσεως ἀποδιδόντας.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* x. c. 466. ὥς δὲ τύπῳ εἰπεῖν καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλεόν, ἅπαντας ἐνθουσιαστικούς τινες καὶ βακχικούς καὶ ἐνοπλίῳ κινήσει μετὰ θορύβου καὶ ψόφου καὶ κυμβάλων καὶ τυμπάνων καὶ ὄπλων, ἔτι δ' αὐλοῦ καὶ βοῆς ἐκπλήττοντας κατὰ τὰς ἱερουργίας ἐν σχήματι διακόνων.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, x. c. 472. ἐν δὲ τοῖς Κρητικοῖς λόγοις οἱ Κουρήτες Διὸς τροφεῖς λέγονται καὶ φύλακες.

<sup>4</sup> x. c. 468. ὥσθ' οἱ Κουρήτες ἦτοι διὰ τὸ νέοι καὶ κόροι ὄντες ὑπουργεῖν ἢ διὰ τὸ κουρუτροφεῖν τὸν Δία (λέγεται γὰρ ἀμφοτέρως) ταύτης ἡξιώθησαν τῆς προσσηγορίας, οἷον ἐὶ Σάτυροί τινες ὄντες περὶ τὸν Δία.

<sup>5</sup> x. c. 466. τοιούτους γὰρ τινες δαίμονας ἢ προπόλους θεῶν τοὺς Κουρήτας φασιν οἱ παραδόντες τὰ Κρητικά καὶ Φρύγια, ἱερουργίας τισὶν ἐμπελεγμένα ταῖς μὲν μυστικαῖς, ταῖς δ' ἑλλαις περὶ τε τὴν τοῦ Διὸς παιδοτροφίαν τὴν ἐν Κρήτῃ καὶ τοὺς τῆς μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν ὀργιασμούς.

<sup>6</sup> x. c. 468.

accompanied by dancing and they allege as their reason the myth about the birth of Zeus, in which Kronos is introduced with his habit of swallowing his children immediately after birth, and Rhea trying to conceal her birth-pangs and to get the new-born child out of the way and doing her utmost to save it. With a view to this she enlists the help of the Kouretes. They surround the goddess and with drums and with the din of other instruments try to strike terror into Kronos and to escape notice whilst trying to filch away the child. The child is then given over to them to be reared with the same care by which it was rescued.'

Strabo says the dancing young men allege or put forward (*προστησάμενοι*) as the reason of their dance the myth about the birth of Zeus. Just so the singers and dancers of the Palaiokastro hymn put forward the myth as the reason of their ritual—

"Ενθα γὰρ σὲ παῖδ' ἄμβροτον,  
ἀσπιδ[ηφόροι τροφῆες]  
παρ' Ῥέας λαβόντες πόδα  
κ[ρούοντες ἀπέκρυψαν].

Strabo clearly regards the ritual as a dramatic presentation of the myth, but the myth is obviously aetiological, the after explanation rather than the initial cause of the ritual. This ritual of the slain child variously called Zeus, Dionysos, and Zagreus we are fortunately able to reconstruct in its main elements from a source earlier than Strabo. As regards the name Zagreus, Suidas<sup>1</sup> tells us that Zagreus is Dionysos 'according to the poets.' This statement, save for the late poet Nonnus, who makes of Zagreus an early Dionysos,<sup>2</sup> is scarcely correct. Zagreus is a ritual rather than a mythological figure, a title, a special and probably primitive aspect of Dionysos as he appeared in Cretan rites. Precisely what element in Dionysos-worship Zagreus represents, will be considered later (p. 336). Meantime, before the full function of the Kouretes can be understood, the myth and mysteries of Zagreus must be examined in detail.

#### *Zagreus and the Thunder-Rites.*

The mysteries of Dionysos (Zagreus) are, says Clement of Alexandria, 'utterly inhuman.' He then proceeds to recount them. Utterly inhuman

<sup>1</sup> Suidas, s.v. Ζαγρεὺς· ὁ Διόνυσος παρὰ ποιηταῖς.

<sup>2</sup> Nonnus, *Bacch.* xxxix. 61. δῶκε γέρας Ζαγρῆϊ, παλαιότερον Διονύσῳ.

they are as Clement understood or rather utterly misunderstood them: very human indeed, social and civilizing through and through if my interpretation be correct, so human and social that a very considerable portion of humanity thinks it well to practise analogous rites to-day.

Let Clement<sup>1</sup> tell his story:—

‘The mysteries of Dionysos are utterly inhuman, for while he was still a child and the Kouretes were dancing round him their armed dance the Titans came stealthily upon him and lured him with childish toys and tore him limb from limb while he was yet a babe. Thus does the Thracian Orpheus, the poet of the Rite, recount

The cones, the rhombos and the limb-bending toys,  
And the fair gold apples of the Hesperides.’

Other authorities add other details. The wicked Titans who stole the child away were painted over with white clay, gypsum<sup>2</sup> (τίτανος). Moreover, and this is of cardinal importance, there is a sequel to the story. After the child has been made away with (ἀφανισμός) or torn to pieces (διασπαραγμός) he comes back to life again: there is an ἀναβίωσις, a παλιγγενεσία,<sup>3</sup> how and when we are not told. Some said<sup>4</sup> the child’s heart was saved and then put back into a figure made of gypsum. In some versions<sup>5</sup> the wicked giants or white-clay-men are struck with lightning by Zeus and burnt to ashes and from these ashes sprang the human race.

The cardinal elements of the story are:—

(1) A child is carefully tended by men called Kouretes. To guard him they dance over him an armed dance.

<sup>1</sup> Abel, *Orphica*, 196. τὰ γὰρ Διονύσου μυστήρια τέλεον ἀπάνθρωπα, ὃν εἰσέτι παῖδα ὄντα, ἐνόπλῳ κινήσει περιχορευόντων Κουρήτων, δόλφ δὲ ὑποδύντων Τιτάνων, ἀπατήσαντες παιδαριώδεσιν ἀθύρμασιν, οὗτοι δὲ οἱ Τιτᾶνες διέσπασαν, ἔτι νηπίαχον ὄντα, ὡς ὁ τῆς τελετῆς ποιητῆς Ὁρφεύς φησιν ὁ Θράκιος.

κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγυια  
μήλᾳ τε χρύσεια καλὰ παρ’ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων.

<sup>2</sup> Harpocrat. *s.v.* ἀπομάττων. ὡς ἄρα οἱ Τιτᾶνες τὸν Διόνυσον ἐλυμήναντο γύψῳ καταπλασάμενοι.

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* xxxv. and *De Ei ap. Delph.* ix. Διόνυσον δὲ καὶ Ζαγρέα καὶ Νυκτέλιον καὶ Ἴσοδαίτην αὐτὸν ὀνομάζουσι, καὶ φθοράς τινος καὶ ἀφανισμοῦ, καὶ τὰς ἀποβιώσεις καὶ παλιγγενεσίας, οἰκεία τοῖς εἰρημέναις μεταβολαῖς αἰνίγματα καὶ μυθεύματα περαίνουσι.

<sup>4</sup> Firmicus Mat. *De Err. Prof. Relig.* 6. . . . imaginem eius ex gypso plastico opere perfecit et cor pueri, ex quo facinus fuerat sorore deferente detectum, in ea parte plastae conlocat, qua pectoris fuerant lineamenta formata.

<sup>5</sup> The sources for all these details are collected in Abel’s *Orphica*, pp. 224 ff. and in Lobeck’s *Aglaophamus*, pp. 553 ff.



(2) The child is made away with, killed, dismembered by men called Titans, 'white-clay-men.'

(3) The child reappears, is brought to life again. Sometimes this is effected by the white-clay-men, sometimes the child reappears as a white-clay-man himself, his heart being put into a figure of gypsum.

(4) The white-clay-men are slain by thunderbolts.

Clement and the other Christian fathers naturally confined their attention to the elements in the rite that seemed to them inhuman, the slaying and dismembering of the child. From their account we have only an accidental hint in the final vengeance on the Titans that thunder played any part in the story.

Fortunately we are able to supplement our knowledge from an account of the mysteries of Zagreus, at once earlier and more sympathetic, which survives in a fragment of the *Cretans* of Euripides.<sup>1</sup> This fragment is perhaps the most important document for Orphic religion that we possess. The reading in one crucial place has been questioned and several emendations suggested. I propose to keep the text and to offer an interpretation of it that may, I think, furnish us with a new and significant factor in the rites of Zagreus.

For a moment let us see where the fragment must have stood in the lost play. The evidence is in part drawn from another recently discovered fragment.<sup>2</sup> We are in the palace of Minos in Crete. A child has been born to the royal house, a portent, the monstrous Minotaur. Minos is troubled, he will purify the palace, will ask the meaning of the portent. The whole scene reminds us of another lost play of Euripides, *Melanippe the Wise*,<sup>3</sup> where the portentous twins are born and Melanippe in her famous, rationalizing, truly Euripidean speech, explains that the order of the cosmos is fixed and that such things as portents cannot be. Minos then sends for the priests and medicine men, the Idaean Daktyls, presumably to purify the palace and bring peace and understanding. They leave their secret sanctuary in Ida—the strange manner of its building they describe,

<sup>1</sup> Nauck, *frag.* 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Berliner Klassikertexte*, v. 2, *Gr. Dichterfragmente* (2) 1907, p. 73. See also G. Körte, *Die Kreter des Euripides* in *Hist. u. Phil. Aufsätze*, E. Curtius, Berlin, 1884, p. 195 and A. Kappelmacher, *Zu den Kreten des Euripides*, *Wiener Eranos*, 50 Versamml. Graz, 1909.

<sup>3</sup> Nauck, *frag.* 484.

they come in white robes to the terror-stricken palace and in solemn anapaests tell of the manner of their life on Mount Ida and of the initiation ceremonies that have made them what they are and have given them authority to cleanse and interpret.

Since they became mystics on Mount Ida their life has been sanctified :

‘ There in one pure stream  
My days have run, the servant I,  
Enhallowed, of Idaean Jove.’<sup>1</sup>

This general ceremonial purity of life they particularize by enumerating the various ritual acts they have accomplished which culminate in their attainment of the title *Bacchos* conferred on them by the college of the Kouretes.

‘ I am set free, and named by name  
A Bacchos of the Mailed Priests.’<sup>2</sup>

The rites of initiation by which they became Bacchoi are three in number :—

- (a) ‘ Where midnight Zagreus roves, I rove,  
I have endured his thunder-cry ;’
- (b) ‘ Fulfilled his red and bleeding feasts ;’
- (c) ‘ Held the Great Mother’s mountain-flame ;’<sup>3</sup>

Rites *b* and *c* the waving of the torches and the *omophagia* I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Rite *a* has hitherto been held unintelligible, and it is on *a* that we must now focus our attention.

Porphry,<sup>5</sup> who preserves the fragment for us—as a text on which to preach vegetarianism—has *βροντάς*. The MSS. follow him with the exception of the Leipzig MS. which has *βροτάς*. Lobeck<sup>6</sup> suggests *σπονδάς*, which may be rejected as of impossible violence. The most plausible suggestion is Diels’ *βούτας* = ox-herd. Dieterich<sup>7</sup> accepts *βούτας* holding *βροντάς* to be

<sup>1</sup> ἄγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνων ἐξ οὗ  
Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμην.

<sup>2</sup> καὶ κουρήτωρ  
Βάκχος ἐκλήθη δσιωθεΐς.

<sup>3</sup> (a) καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζαγρέως βροντὰς  
(b) τὰς τ’ ὁμοφάγους δαΐτας τελέσας  
(c) μητρὶ τ’ ὀρεΐφ δᾶδας ἀνασχών.

<sup>4</sup> *Prolegomena*, pp. 483, 499.

<sup>5</sup> *De Abst.* iv. 19.

<sup>6</sup> See Nauck, *ad loc.*

<sup>7</sup> *De Hymnis Orphicis*, p. 11.

hopeless; 'perperam traditur βροντάς praeclare emendavit Dielesius.' The *praeclare* is juster than the *perperam*. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff<sup>1</sup> follows Diels, interpreting βούτας as βουκόλος. The temptation to adopt βούτας is severe. In the *omophagia* a wild bull was hunted and eaten; the bull-forms of Dionysos are familiar; his followers are known to have been called βουκόλοι; at Athens we have a βουκολεῖον and indeed an actual βούτης (Butes) worshipped in the Erechtheion. But had the original reading been βούτας it is hard to see why the unintelligible βροντάς should have been substituted. Following Prof. Gilbert Murray's advice I have kept the text<sup>2</sup> and waited for further evidence as to its interpretation.

Light came from an unexpected quarter. In investigating thunderbolts I was referred to a passage, again, oddly enough, in Porphyry. Pythagoras, Porphyry<sup>3</sup> tells us, in the course of his journey from Asia Minor to Italy came to Crete. There he met on landing some of the Mystae of Morgos one of the Idaean Daktyls, by whom he was initiated into their rites. The first rite he underwent at their hands was purification and this purification was effected by—the thunderbolt or thunder-stone.

A thunder-stone is not so strange an implement of purification as it might at first sight appear. Celts or stone-axes over a large portion of the civilized world are, by a strange blunder, taken to be thunderbolts—weapons shot down by the sky god. Such stones are called to-day by the modern Greek peasant 'lightning-axes' (ἀστροπελέκια, a shortened form of ἀστραποπελέκια). Great is their value as charms against thunder, *similia similibus*, to keep milk sweet, to cure rheumatism and the like.<sup>4</sup>

The celt reproduced in Fig. 1 is a curious illustration of the use of these supposed thunder-stones in mysteries. It was found in the Argolid and is now in the Central Museum at Athens. The inscription<sup>5</sup> cannot

<sup>1</sup> *Griechische Dichterfragmente*, p. 77, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Prolegomena*, p. 480, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Vit. Pyth.* 17. Κρήτης δ' ἐπιβὰς τοῖς Μόργου μύσταις ἐνδὲς τῶν Ἰδαίων Δακτύλων, ὅφ' ἂν καὶ ἐκαθάρθη τῇ κεραυνίᾳ λίθῳ.

<sup>4</sup> For the superstitions that gather round *thunder-stones*, celts as supposed thunder-stones, see H. Martin's *La Foudre dans l'Antiquité*. To the general question of the sanctity of thunder-stones and their place in the development of Greek religion I hope to return elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> This inscription is inaccurately reproduced by Perrot and Chipiez, *Grèce Primitive*, vol. vi. p. 119, Fig. 5. The first four letters as given by them are Βάκχ which led me to hope that the word inscribed was Βάκχος, but Mr. R. M. Dawkins was good enough to examine the actual stone and to send me the inscription corrected. The drawing in Fig. 1, with the correct inscription, I owe to the kindness of Mrs. Hugh Stewart. Reproduced also by Cartailhac, *L'âge de pierre*, p. 31, Fig. 14.

be interpreted and is probably of the *Abrahas* order, and it is clear that the scene represented has to do with Mithraic mysteries. We have the story

of the holy bull and below, a figure that looks like a Roman soldier bearing a rod surmounted by an eagle, is received by a priest: the soldier is probably qualifying to become an 'Eagle.'



ΒΑΚΑΞΙΧΥΧΠΑΠΑΦΙΕΡΙΕ

FIG. 1.—THUNDER-STONE.  
(Central Museum, Athens.)

Porphry<sup>1</sup> then goes on to enumerate the various ceremonies gone through during initiation. Pythagoras had to wear a wreath of black wool, to lie face foremost near the sea for a whole night and finally to go down into the cave of Idaean Zeus, a great underground cavern on Mount Ida. There he had to spend thrice nine days, and then at last he was allowed to gaze on the throne which year by year was draped for Zeus. There was in Crete

a tomb as well as a throne, since Porphry tells us that Pythagoras engraved an inscription on it as follows; 'Pythagoras to Zeus'—and the beginning of what he wrote was:—

'Here died Zan and lies buried, whom they call Zeus,'

an inscription which reminds us of another divine being whose tomb Zeus took over:—

'Here died Pikos and lies buried, who is also Zeus.'<sup>2</sup>

After all these solemnities the final apocalypse of an empty throne falls rather flat. Why is the throne draped if it is to remain empty? Was the throne really empty? I think not—Zeus in human shape was not seated thereon, otherwise we should have been told, but his throne may on certain occasions have been tenanted by a symbol as, or even more awe-inspiring than himself—his thunderbolt.

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit. supra.* ἔωθεν μὲν παρὰ θαλάττῃ πρηνὴς ἐκταθείς, νύκτωρ δὲ παρὰ ποταμῷ ἀρνειοῦ μέλανος μαλλοῖς ἐστεφανωμένος. εἰς δὲ τὸ Ἰδαῖον καλούμενον ἄντρον καταβὰς ἔρια ἔχων μέλανα τὰς νομιζόμενας τρις ἐννέα ἡμέρας ἐκεῖ διέτριψεν καὶ καθήγισεν τῷ Διὶ τὸν τε στορνύμενον αὐτῷ κατ' ἔτος θρόνον ἐθεάσατο, ἐπίγραμμα τ' ἐνεχάραξεν ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ ἐπιγράψας 'Πυθαγόρας τῷ Διὶ,' οὗ ἡ ἀρχή· ὦδε θανὼν κεῖται Ζάν, ὃν Δία κικλήσκουσιν.

<sup>2</sup> Suidas, s.v. Πίκος . . . ἐνθάδε κεῖται θανὼν . . . Πίκος δὲ καὶ Ζεὺς.

The two coins in Fig. 2 suggest this.<sup>1</sup> The first is from Seleukeia Pieria,<sup>2</sup> the date probably early in the first century B.C.; the reverse shows a large thunderbolt with fillet attached, lying on a cushion on a throne. The legend is ΣΕΛΕΥΚΕΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΟΝΟΜΟΥ. The turreted head on the obverse is supposed to be the Tyche of Seleukeia. The second coin figured is a denarius of Antoninus Pius and also shows a thunderbolt resting on a spread throne. Closely analogous in idea though not in style is a Graeco-Roman relief (Fig. 3) now in the museum at Mantua.<sup>3</sup> Here again we have the spread throne, the thunderbolt; the only addition is an eagle.

The thunderbolt was to the primitive Greek not the symbol or attribute of the god but itself the divine thing, the embodiment and vehicle of *mana*. As such, long after Zeus had taken on full human form in literature, it held its place in cultus, not as a weapon in the hand of the

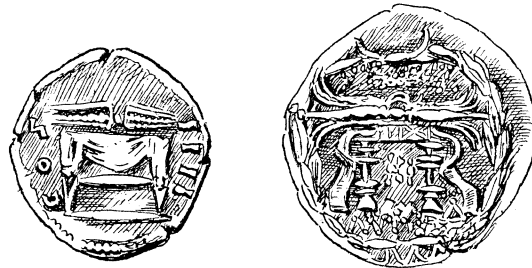


FIG. 2.—COINS SHOWING THE THUNDERBOLT LAID ON A THRONE.

human god but actually occupying his throne. This identity of the two is specially manifest in the figure of the infant Zagreus. In the terracotta relief<sup>4</sup> from the Palazzo Colonna reproduced in Fig. 4 we have three dancing Kouretes or Korybantes, who clash their shields over the infant

<sup>1</sup> The coins reproduced are in the possession of Mr. A. B. Cook and will be discussed in his forthcoming book on the *European Sky-God*. He very kindly allows me to anticipate their publication.

<sup>2</sup> *Brit. Mus. Cat. Gk. Coins, Syria* pp. 270 f., Pl. XXXII. 6 and 8. The thunder-cult of Seleukeia Pieria is well known. Appian in his *History of Syria* (c. 56) says of the inhabitants of Seleukeia *θήσκουσι καὶ ὑμνοῦσι καὶ νῦν Κεραυνόν*. Keraunos had annually appointed priests, *κεραυνοφόροι*, with whom may perhaps be compared the *λιθοφόροι* who had a seat in the Dionysiac theatre at Athens. See my *Mon. and Myth. of Ancient Athens*, p. 274.

<sup>3</sup> E. Braun, *Kunstmythologie*, Taf. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Annali d. Inst.* xii. (1840) Tav. d'agg. K. I am uncertain where the relief now is. E. Braun, who publishes it, says it passed from the Palazzo Colonna to the royal castle of Agliè near Turin.

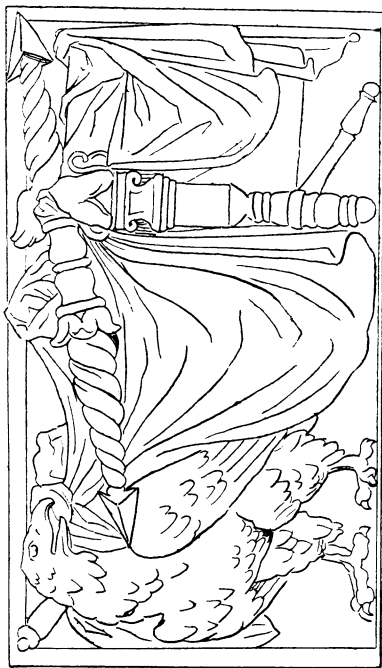


FIG. 3.—RELIEF IN THE MUSEUM OF MANTUA.

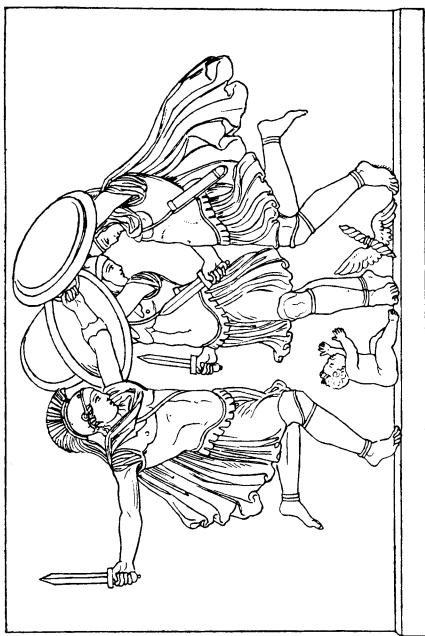


FIG. 4.—TERRACOTTA RELIEF FROM THE PALAZZO COLONNA, ROME.

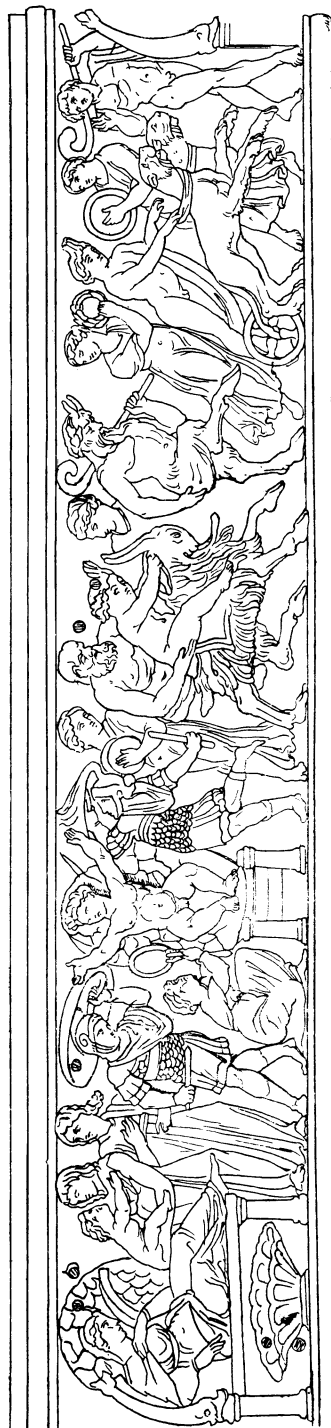


FIG. 5.—IVORY RELIEF IN THE MUSEUM OF MILAN.

Zeus; near him, lying on the ground, is a thunderbolt, his equivalent rather than his attribute.

The human child completely replaces the thunderbolt. On the ivory relief<sup>1</sup> from Milan (Fig. 5) the child is seated on the throne once held by the thunderbolt. But the fact that child and thunder-stone were one and the same was deep-rooted in myth as well as ritual. Hesiod<sup>2</sup> knew it, at least subconsciously. When Kronos was about to swallow Zeus, what is it that Rhea gave him and that he really swallowed? A stone in swaddling clothes. On the well-known relief<sup>3</sup> on the Capitoline altar Rhea is figured with the swaddled stone in her hands offering it to Kronos. When the 'appointed time came' that stone which he had swallowed last he vomited forth and set it up on the wide-wayed Earth as a sign and a marvel.<sup>4</sup> In goodly Pytho it was seen by Pausanias,<sup>5</sup> it was anointed with oil day by day and had a yearly festival. It was not till the stone was vomited up that the thunder and lightning were let loose.<sup>6</sup> Long before Zeus was Zeus, thunder and lightning were divine potencies, their vehicle a thunder-stone; by such a thunder-stone was Pythagoras purified, on such a thunder-stone did he gaze in the Diktaean cave.

Given then a rite in which the catechumen is purified by a thunder-stone and which has for its culmination the probable, if not certain, ἀνακάλυψις of a thunderbolt on a throne, was it in human nature not to heighten the dramatic effect by adding the sound of simulated thunder?

Here again we are not left to conjecture: we have definite evidence that in certain mystery-rites thunder was actually imitated by bull-voiced mimes, by drums and other apparatus. Strabo<sup>7</sup> in his account of the Kouretes summarized above (p. 309) mentions that Aeschylus<sup>8</sup> in the lost

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Zeit.* 1846, Taf. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 485. τῷ δὲ σπαργανίσασα μέγαν λίθον ἐγγυάλιξεν.

<sup>3</sup> Weibek, *Kunstmythologie*, Atlas, iii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 496. πρῶτον δ' ἐξείμεσσε λίθον, πύματον καταπίνων·  
τὸν μὲν Ζεὺς στήριξε κατὰ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης  
Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ γυάλοις ὕπο Παρνησοῖο  
σῆμ' ἔμεν ἐξοπίσω, θαῦμα θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

<sup>5</sup> x. 24. 7.

<sup>6</sup> See Prof. Gilbert Murray's illuminating analysis and interpretation of the confused Hesiodic account in *Anthropology and the Classics*, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> x. 470.

<sup>8</sup> Nauck, *Fr.* 57.

ταυρόφοθογγοὶ δ' ὑπομυκῶνται  
πόθεν ἐξ ἀφανοῦς φοβεροὶ μῖμοι  
τυπάνου δ' εἰκὼν ὥσθ' ὑπογαίου  
βροντῆς φέρεται βαρυταρβής.

*Edoni* says that the instruments of Kotys were used by the Thracians in their orgies of Dionysos. Kotys is but a Thraco-Phrygian form of the Mountain Mother to whom the Cretan mystic expressly states he held aloft the torches. She was variously called Kotys, Bendis, Rhea, Kybele. After describing the din made by the 'mountain gear' of Kotyto, the maddening hum of the *bombykes*, the clash of the bronze cymbals and the twang of strings, Aeschylus goes on '*And bull-voices roar thereto from somewhere out of the unseen, fearful semblances, and from a drum an image as it were of thunder underground is borne on the air heavy with dread.*'

Real thunder cannot be had to order, mimic thunder can, and we know was. Nor is it easy to imagine a more efficient instrument of ἑκπληξίς. We know the very instrument with which in ancient days mimic thunder was manufactured, the famous Bull-roarer or ῥόμβος, the sound of whose whirring is mystical, awe-inspiring, and truly religious. It is like nothing in the world but itself, perhaps the nearest approach is the ominous sound of a rising storm-wind or angry imminent thunder. The rhombos is carefully described by the scholiast<sup>1</sup> on Clement of Alexandria in commenting on the passage quoted above, in which he describes 'the wholly inhuman mysteries of Dionysos Zagreus.' The rhombos, says the scholiast, is 'a bit of wood to which a string is tied, and it is whirled round and round at initiation rites to make a whirring sound.'

In the mysteries of Zagreus, then, as practised by the Kouretes and Idaean Daktyls, the initiated man (1) was purified by a thunderbolt, (2) heard mimic thunder, (3) beheld a thunderbolt on a throne. He may I think fairly be said after these experiences to have 'accomplished the Thunders.'

To resume, in the mysteries of Zagreus-Dionysos we have as certain elements:—

(1) The child and the toys, the famous *crepundia*.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Clemens Alex. Cohort.* p. 5. Κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος· ξυλάριον οὗ ἔξηπται τὸ σπαρτίον καὶ ἐν ταῖς τελεταῖς ἐδονεῖτο ἵνα ῥοιζῇ. Lobeck, *Aglaoph.* p. 700; the scholiast professes to explain κῶνος but, as Mr. A. B. Cook kindly pointed out to me, κῶνος is obviously some form of spinning top. The object described as a bit of wood with a string through it, is obviously a rhombos or Bull-roarer. The bibliography of the Bull-roarer is fully given by Dr. Frazer, *Golden Bough*<sup>2</sup>, vol. iii. note 1. To the authorities here given must now be added the valuable papers by Mr. R. R. Marett, *Savage Supreme Beings and the Bull-Roarer*, in *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1910, and M. van Gennep, *Mythes et Légendes d'Australie*, Introduction, pp. lxviii. ff. The interesting fragment of a Dipylon vase published by Mr. J. P. Droop, *B.S.A.* xii. p. 82, Fig. 2 (b) represents a rite of the making of thunder and lightning. But I reserve the discussion of this fragment for a future occasion.



(2) The death, disappearance or tearing to pieces of the child (ἀφανισμός, σπαραγμός).

(3) The re-appearance, re-birth, resurrection of the child (ἀναβίωσις, παλιγγενεσία).

(4) The Titans disguised with the white clay.

(5) The Thunder-Rites.

What does it all mean?

The orthodox explanation is that the child is a sort of vegetation spirit or corn-baby, torn to pieces in winter, revived in spring. I do not deny that in the myth there is an element of corn-baby, but the explanation cannot be regarded as satisfactory, as it fails to explain the Thunder-Rites, the Kouretes, and the Titans disguised with white clay.

I offer a simpler and I think more complete explanation. Every single element, however seemingly preposterous, in both the ritual and myth of Zagreus can be explained I believe by the analogy of *primitive rites of tribal initiation*.

This I had long suspected because of the white-clay-men. These I have already fully discussed elsewhere<sup>1</sup> and I need now only briefly resume what is necessary for the immediate argument. The word Titanes (white-clay-men) comes of course from τίτᾱνος, white earth or clay, gypsum. The Titānes, the white-clay-men, were later, regardless of quantity, mythologized into Titānes, Titans, giants. Harpocration,<sup>2</sup> explaining the word ἀπομάττων, says that the Titans, when they tore Dionysos to pieces were covered with a coat of gypsum in order that they might not be recognized. Later people when they were initiated went on doing the same thing and for the same reason that most people do most things nowadays, because 'it was the thing to do.' Nonnus<sup>3</sup> also says that the Titans were 'whitened with mystic gypsum.'

A coat of white paint was one means among many of making yourself up as a bogey, a ghost, and disguising your real character as a common

<sup>1</sup> See my *Prolegomena*, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> ἐκμιμούμενοι τὰ μυθολογούμενα παρ' ἐνίοις, ὡς ἔρα οἱ Τιτᾱνες τὸν Διόνυσον ἐλυμήναντο γύψῳ καταπλασάμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ μὴ γινώριμοι γενέσθαι. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τὸ ἔθνος ἐκλιπεῖν, πηλῷ δὲ ὕστερον καταπλάττεσθαι νομῖμον χάριν.

<sup>3</sup> Nonn. *Dionys.* xxvii. 228. ἐλευκαίνοντο δὲ γύψῳ  
μυστιπόλῳ.

human man. Any disguise reinforces the normal personality. A coat of white or sometimes black paint is the frequent disguise of savages to-day when, in ceremonies of initiation for the edification of their juniors, they counterfeit their tribal ancestors.

The Titans then, the white-clay-men, are real men dressed up as bogeys to perform initiation rites. It is only later when their meaning is forgotten that they are explained as Tītānes, mythological giants. Thus much was clear to me years ago: *i.e.* that under the myth of Zagreus lay some form of initiation rite. What I then did not see, though my blindness seems to me now almost incredible, was the significance of the child and the toys and above all why the child was first killed and then brought back to life. Nor did I understand the meaning of the Thunder-rites.

Again light came to me unexpectedly from a paper kindly sent to me by Dr. Frazer<sup>1</sup> containing an account of certain initiation ceremonies among the Wiradthuri tribes of New South Wales. This account must be briefly resumed:—

‘At a certain stage in the initiation ceremonies of these tribes the women and children huddled together and were securely covered up with blankets and bushes. Then a number of men came from the sacred ground where the initiation ceremonies were performed. Some of them swung bull-roarers, and some of them took up lighted sticks from a fire, and threw them over the women and children “to make them believe that Dhuramoolan had tried to burn them.” At a later period of the ceremonies the boys were similarly covered up with blankets, a large fire was kindled near them, and when the roaring of the wood and the crackling of the flames became audible, several old men began to swing bull-roarers, and the lads were told that Dhuramoolan was about to burn them. These performances were explained by a legend that Dhuramoolan, a powerful being, whose voice sounded like the rumbling of distant thunder, had been charged by a still more powerful being called Baiamai, with the duty of taking the boys away into the bush and instructing them in all the laws, traditions, and customs of the community. So Dhuramoolan pretended

<sup>1</sup> *On some Ceremonies of the Central Australian Tribes.* Melbourne, 1901. Dr. Frazer’s authority is R. H. Matthews, *The Burbung of the Wiradthuri Tribes, Journal of Anthropological Institute*, xxv. (1896), pp. 297 *sq.*, 308, 311.

that he always killed the boys, cut them up, and burnt them to ashes, after which he moulded the ashes into human shape, and restored them to life as new beings.'

With the Cretan ritual in our minds it is clear that the Wiradthuri rites present more than an analogy ; *mutato nomine* the account might have been written of Zagreus.

I have chosen the account of the Wiradthuri out of countless other instances, because in it we have the definite statement that the boys were burnt to ashes and Zagreus-like remodelled again in human shape. But everywhere in Africa, in America, in Australia, in the South Pacific Islands, we come upon what is practically the same sequence of ceremonies. When a boy is initiated, that is when he passes from childhood to adolescence, this pantomime, this terrifying (*ἐκπληξίς*), this painting him with clay, this pretended killing of the child, and bringing him back to life again as a young man, is everywhere enacted. Till the boy has died and come to life again, till he has utterly 'put away childish things' he cannot be a full member of the tribe, he may not know the tribal secrets or dance the tribal dances, he may not handle bull-roarers, he cannot perform any of the functions of the full-grown man.

At and through his initiation the boy is brought into close communion with his tribal ancestors : he becomes socialized, part of the body politic. Henceforth he belongs to something bigger, more potent, more lasting, than his own individual existence : he is part of the stream of the totemic life, one with the generations before and yet to come.

So vital, so crucial is the change that the savage exhausts his imagination and his ingenuity in his emphasis of death and new birth. It is not enough to be killed, you must be torn to pieces or burnt to ashes. Above all you must utterly forget your past life. The precautions taken to secure this completeness of death and resurrection and consequent oblivion are sometimes disgusting enough. Murder is carefully counterfeited with the help of bladders of blood and the like. Sometimes the details are amusing : not only does the boy forget his own name that in this his social baptism he may receive a new one, but he does not know his own mother, he has forgotten how to speak and can only stammer, he cannot even swallow, he has to be artificially fed. He cannot come in straight at the door but must stumble in backwards. If he forgets and stupidly recognizes

his mother or eats his food in normal fashion he is taken back and 'huskin-awed' again.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only the passage from childhood to adolescence that among savages is marked by rites of initiation of death and resurrection. As Monsieur van Gennep<sup>2</sup> has well shown in his suggestive book, the ceremonies that accompany each successive stage of life, ceremonies, *i.e.* of birth, of marriage, of ordination as a medicine-man, and finally of death, are, no less than the ceremonies of adolescence, one and all *Rites de Passage*, ceremonies of transition, of going out from the old and going in to the new. In each and all the sequence is the same; purification (κάθαρσις) from the old must precede revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of the new. In each and all the candidate must bathe in Lethe before he can drink of the waters of Mnemosyne. Looked at socially<sup>3</sup> the process is one of tribal initiation; moralized, spiritually envisaged, it becomes a Death unto Sin and a New Birth unto Righteousness, ἔφυγον κακόν, εὖρον ἄμεινον.

We return now with material for a fuller understanding to the Kouretes. The Armed Dancers, the 'Mailed Priests' were also Child-Rearers (παιδοτρόφοι), 'Nurses as well as Slayers,' as the Orphic Hymn says.<sup>4</sup> These functions of the Kouretes and Korybantes, which seemed at the outset incongruous are now seen to be of the very essence of their being. They are armed because they have themselves attained to manhood; through initiation they are Child-Rearers, because in their turn they take the boys from their mothers and tend and initiate a new generation of warriors.

Their other functions fall easily and naturally into place. They are the inventors of the arts of civilization, because, if the investigations of recent

<sup>1</sup> For details as to Death and Resurrection element in initiation Ceremonies see H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde*, 1902; H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies*, 1908; H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions*, 1909, pp. 144 ff.; A. van Gennep, *Les rites de Passage*, 1909, pp. 93 ff.; L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Les fonctions mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures*, 1910, pp. 409 ff.; and especially, Dr. J. G. Frazer, *G.B.* 13.<sup>2</sup> iii. pp. 423 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Rites de Passage*, Paris, 1909.

<sup>3</sup> This is not the place to discuss the question how far religious conceptions are the outcome of collective representation and as such are socially induced. But I should like here to record my conviction that so far as Greek religion goes the theories of MM. Durkheim and Hubert and Mauss are supported by the fact that Orphic ritual and religion clearly takes its rise socially in tribal initiation rites. In the light of these new sociological investigations the phenomena of early Greek religion as well as early Greek philosophy will have to be entirely reconsidered, a matter to which, together with the question of Lethe, Mnemosyne, and the Platonic ἀνάμνησις, I hope to return in another connection

<sup>4</sup> xxxviii. 14. τροφές τε καὶ αὐτ' ὀλετῆρες.

anthropologists<sup>1</sup> are correct, it is not so much about the family and the domestic hearth that the beginnings of the arts cluster, as about the institution known as the Man's House.<sup>2</sup> Here unencumbered by woman, man practises and develops his diverse crafts, makes his weapons, his boats, his sacred images, his dancing masks. Even after marriage when he counts as an elderly man, he returns to the Man's House to keep in touch with civilization and the outside world. The Kouretes at Messene had, Pausanias<sup>3</sup> tells us, not a *naos* but a *megaron*.<sup>4</sup>

Equally explicable in the light of initiation is the function of Kouretes and Korybantes as *Dancers*. Pantomimic dancing is of the essence of each and every primitive mystery. To disclose the mysteries is as Lucian<sup>5</sup> puts it 'to dance out the mysteries.' Instruction among savage peoples is always imparted more or less in mimetic dances.<sup>6</sup> At initiation you learn certain dances which confer on you definite social status. When a man is too old to dance, he hands over his dance to another and a younger, and he then among some tribes ceases to exist socially. His funeral when he dies is celebrated with scanty and perfunctory rites; having lost his dance he is a negligible social unit.<sup>7</sup>

Finally in the light of initiation ceremonies we understand why the Kouretes and Korybantes though they are real live youths are yet regarded as *δαίμονες*, as half-divine,<sup>8</sup> as possessed (*ἐνθεοί*), enthusiastic, ecstatic and why their ceremonies are characterized by Strabo<sup>9</sup> as orgiastic. The precise meaning of orgies will concern us later, for the present it is

<sup>1</sup> See especially H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies*, ch. i.

<sup>3</sup> iv. 31. 7 *Κουρήτων μέγαρον ἔνθα ζῆα τὰ πάντα ὁμοίως καταγίζουσιν*.

<sup>4</sup> That institutions analogous to those of the Man's House among savages lived on in Crete we have abundant evidence in Strabo's account (B. x.) of Cretan institutions. The *Ἀγέλαι* with their *ἄρχοντες*, the *συσσίτια*, the *ἀνδρεία* clearly belong to the same social morphology as the *Männerhaus*. It is probable that the *ἄρπαγή* and the custom *ἀποκρύπτειν τὸν παῖδα* (B. x. 483), is a misunderstanding and in part a corruption of primitive initiation ceremonies.

<sup>5</sup> *Pisc.* 33. *ἦν τινα καὶ τῶν μεμνημένων ἰδὼν ἐξαγορεύοντα τοῖν θεοῖν τὰ τὰ πόρρητα καὶ ἐξορχούμενον ἀγανακτῆσω . . .*

<sup>6</sup> Webster, *op. cit.* pp. 50, 51.

<sup>7</sup> R. Hertz, *Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort. Année Sociologique*, x. 1905-6.

<sup>8</sup> Epimenides of Knossos, the typical medicine-man of antiquity, was addressed as *Κούρης νέος*—he had the power of leaving his body and returning to it at will—see Suidas, s.v. *Ἐπιμενίδης*,—he was *δαινὸς τὰ θεῖα*—he acquired his lore not by learning but through the teaching of a dream. He is said to have written a *Κουρήτων καὶ Κορυβάντων γένεσις*. He was, some said, worshipped by the Cretans as a god, see Diog. Laert. i. 111-115, and Max. Tyr. c. 22, p. 224.

<sup>9</sup> x. 465. *ὥς δὲ τύφῃ εἰπεῖν καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλεόν, ἅπαντας ἐνθουσιαστικούς τινας καὶ Βακχικούς.*

enough to note that in most savage mysteries it is a main part of the duty of initiators to impersonate gods or demons. The initiators dress up as the ancestral ghosts of the tribe, sometimes even wearing the actual skulls<sup>1</sup> of their ancestors, and in this disguise dance round the catechumens and terrify them half out of their senses. It is only when fully initiated that the boys learn that these terrific figures are not spirits at all but just their living uncles and cousins.<sup>2</sup> The secret is never imparted to women and children. To do so would be death.

The Kouretes as ancestral ghosts are not yet gods but, as remarked at the outset, they are the stuff of which primitive gods are made. The divine personage of the myth, as distinguished from the ritual of the Kouretes, was originally a *κούρος*, later he sank to be a child, a babe, variously called Zagreus, Dionysos, Zeus. We may suspect that the Greeks when they lost touch with the real meaning of the rites of adolescence invented Infant-Initiation.<sup>3</sup> Anyhow to later theologians the 'infant' Zeus always presented something of difficulty if not of scandal: a babe is the attribute of a divine Mother rather than of a divine Father, and an infant Zeus, the cult of the mother once overshadowed, needed apology. It was consigned to a 'local legend' and was due to 'contaminatio with the child Dionysos.'

With the discovery of the Palaikastro Hymn the Kouros came to his own again. The maiden worships Kore the Maid, the mother worships the Mother, *Meter* or *Maia*; the senate of elders, the *γέροντες* worship Zeus the Counsellor. But the young men in their pride, released from boyhood and the sway of women, the young men armed and ripe for marriage, the Kouretes, worship their own image, their prince of youths, their greatest Kouros,<sup>4</sup>

Ἰώ, μέγιστε Κούρε, χαῖρέ μοι.

<sup>1</sup> H. Schurtz, *op. cit.* p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> H. Webster, *op. cit.* pp. 101 and 187.

<sup>3</sup> There may have been, as Mr. Hugh E. Seebohm kindly points out to me, a blend of the various rites undergone at successive ages, birth, puberty, etc.

<sup>4</sup> In the archaic votive inscriptions of Thera carved on the living rock *Koures* occurs three times, each time with a *Κόρρα*, see *I.G.I.M.A.* iii. 354, 355, 371, and Hiller v. Gaertringen, *Die archaische Kultur d. Insel Thera*, Berlin, 1897, p. 17. For local cults of the Kouretes, see Prof. Bosanquet's paper.

*The Kouros as Year-God.*

Δίκταν ἐς ἐνιαυτὸν ἔρ-  
πε καὶ γέγαθι μολπαῖ.

The function of the Kouros, the Divine Youth, is to bring fertility ; at his coming come prosperity, physical and moral, to bees and flocks and herds, to men and cities and sea-faring ships.

Moreover, and again the phrase is arresting, the Invocation Hymn (ὕμνος κλητικός) bids the Kouros come 'for the year' (εἰς ἐνιαυτόν). What does εἰς ἐνιαυτόν precisely mean? What is the connection between the Year and the Divine Young Man?

With the Greek mythology, *i.e.* intellectual *representation* is always apt to obscure ritual. The Kouretes have become mythological, their ritual meaning as initiators has been, we have seen, obscured. Still more obscure is their function as δαίμονες of the year. Happily certain kindred Roman figures kept their actuality, and their ritual functions as δαίμονες of the year are clearly defined. The word constantly recurring brings to mind inevitably these Roman functionaries. It is impossible to hear the ritual injunction *θόρε* without recalling the Roman 'leapers,' the Salii. In the light of the Salii the riddle of the Kouros as Year-God is easily read.

*(a) The Salii: Mamurius Veturius and Anna Perenna.*

Denys of Halicarnassos<sup>1</sup> in his full and interesting account of the Salii saw that Kouretes and Salii were substantially the same: 'In my opinion,' he says, 'the Salioi are what in the Greek language are called Kouretes, we (*i.e.* the Greeks) give them their name from their age, from the word *κοῦροι*, the Romans from their strenuous movements, for jumping and leaping is called by the Romans *salire*.' Denys exactly hits the mark, the term *Kouretes* expresses the essential fact common to Salii, Korybantes, etc., that all are youths; the various special names, the meanings of some of which are lost, emphasize particular functions.

Denys<sup>2</sup> describes in detail the accoutrement of the Salii, which reminds us rather of priest than warrior. He notes the purple chitons and

<sup>1</sup> *Ant. Rom.* ii. 70, 71. καὶ εἰσιν οἱ σάλιοι κατὰ γοῶν τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην Ἑλληνικῶ μεθερμηνευθέντες ὀνόματι Κουρήτες, ὅφ' ἡμῶν μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡλικίας οὕτως ὠνομασμένοι παρὰ τοὺς κούρους, ὑπὸ δὲ Ῥωμαίων ἐπὶ τῆς συντόνου κινήσεως. τὸ γὰρ ἐξάλλεσθαι τε καὶ πηδᾶν σαλῖρε ὑπ' αὐτῶν λέγεται.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.* καὶ τὰς καλουμένας ἀπίκας ἐπικείμενοι ταῖς κεφαλαῖς, πέλους ὑψηλοὺς εἰς σχῆμα συναγομένους κωνοειδές, ὥς Ἑλλήνες προσαγορεύουσι κυρβασίας.

bronze girdles, the short cloaks and the conical caps<sup>1</sup> (*apices*) called, he says, by the Greeks *κυρβασιαι*, a name with which very possibly the word Kurbas, a bye-form of Korybas, was connected. One point in his description is of special interest: Each man, he says, is girt with a sword and in his right hand wields 'a spear or a staff or something of that sort,'<sup>2</sup> in his left is a Thracian shield. We think of the Salii as clashing their swords on their shields, but the Salii seen by Denys seem to have had some implement as to the exact nature of which Denys is uncertain.

The design in Fig. 6 from a relief found at Anagni<sup>3</sup> may throw some light on this uncertainty. The Salii are shown in long priestly robes with

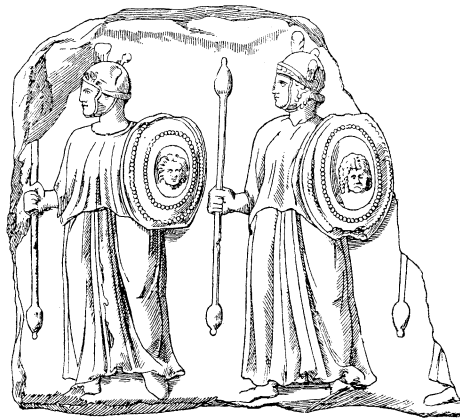


FIG. 6.—RELIEF FROM ANAGNI.

shields in their left hands. In their right is not, as we should expect, a spear or a sword but an implement that may be a double drumstick.<sup>4</sup> Some such implements Denys must have seen. This looks back to the old

<sup>1</sup> Among savages a conical cap of striking appearance is a frequent element in the disguise of the initiator or medicine-man. See Schurtz, *op. cit.* pp. 336, 370, 384, and L. v. Schroeder, *Mimus und Mysterium*, p. 476, and Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.* παρέξωσται δ' ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ξίφος καὶ τῇ μὲν δεξιᾷ χειρὶ λόγχην ἢ ῥάβδον ἢ τι τοιοῦθ' ἕτερον κρατεῖ, τῇ δ' εὐωνύμῳ κατέχει πέλτην Θρακίαν.

<sup>3</sup> *Annali d. Inst.* 1869, Tav. d'agg. E. O. Benndorf, who publishes the relief does not say where it now is.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Cyril Bailey suggests to me that it may represent some sort of thunder-making implement, and kindly reminds me that a fragment of the *Carmen Saliare* reads:—

Cume tonas Leucesie prae tet tremonti  
quom tibi cunei dextumum tonaront.

To the question of these implements I hope to return on another occasion in a discussion of Thunder-Rites.



days when the shield was not of metal but of skin. Euripides<sup>1</sup> speaking of Crete, says that there the triple-crested Korybantes found for Dionysos and his Bacchantes their 'skin-stretched orb.' In a word timbrel and shield were one and the same, a skin stretched on a circular or oval frame and played on with a drumstick; the gear of Salii and Korybantes alike was, to begin with, musical as well as military.

The helmets worn by the Salii on the relief may also be noted. They are not of the form we should expect as representing the canonical *apex*. They have three projections and in this respect recall the 'triple-crested' Korybantes of Euripides.<sup>2</sup> Possibly the central knob may have been originally of greater length and prominence and may have given its name to the apex. The shields carried on the Anagni relief are slightly oblong but not indented; the regular indented 'Mycenaean' shape is well seen on an Etruscan gem in the Museum at Florence.<sup>3</sup>

The first month of the old Roman year, March, the month of Mars, was given up to the activities of the Salii. We have no evidence that they took any part in initiation ceremonies, but it is worth noting that it was in the month of March (17th) at the Liberalia, that, according to Ovid,<sup>4</sup> the Roman boy assumed the toga. This assumption qualified him for military service and may have been the last survival of a tribal initiation ceremony. On the first day of the year, the birthday of Mars, it was fabled, the original *ancile* fell from heaven<sup>5</sup> and through the greater part of the month the holy shields were kept 'moving.' Of the various and complex ceremonials conducted by the Salii we need only examine two,<sup>6</sup> which throw light, I think, on the Palaikastro hymn:—

<sup>1</sup> *Bacch.* 123.

ἐνθα τρικόρυβες ἄντροις  
βυσσότονον κύκλωμα τόδε  
μοι Κορύβαντες ἤδρον.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit. supra.*

<sup>3</sup> See Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, p. 455, Fig. 83. Denys states that the shield carried on the left arm was a Thracian *pelta*. Prof. Ridgeway concludes (*op. cit.* p. 465) that it was the shield of the true Thracians, the kindred of the Mycenaean people, and that it survived in the rites of the Kouretes. According to Clement (*Strom.* i. 16, *sub init.*) the *pelta* was invented by the Illyrians, who, if Prof. Ridgeway is right, belong to the primitive Aegean stock. A curious double *ancile* appears on a denarius of P. Licinius Stolo, figured by Mr. W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 350. On the same coin the *apex* is very clearly shown.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 771. Restat ut inveniam quare toga libera detur  
Lucifero pueris, candide Bacche, tuo.

<sup>5</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 259–273.

<sup>6</sup> The sources for both festivals are fully given in Roscher's *Lexicon*, s.v. *Mars*, and in Mr. Warde Fowler's *Roman Festivals*, pp. 44–54.

(a) the Mamuralia (March 14).

(b) the festival of Anna Perenna (March 15).

Both have substantially the same content.

Ovid<sup>1</sup> asks

‘Who now will tell me why the Salii bear  
Mars’ sacred arms and chant Mamurius?’

The question has been long ago answered by Mannhardt, Usener, and Dr. Frazer.<sup>2</sup> Ovid will have it that Mamurius is commemorated because he was the skilful smith who made the eleven counterfeit *ancilia*, but Lydus<sup>3</sup> lets out the truth. On March 14, the day before the first full moon of the new year, a man dressed in goat-skins was led in procession through the streets of Rome beaten with long white rods and driven out of the city. His name was, Lydus says, Mamurius, and Mamurius we know was also called Veturius.<sup>4</sup> He is the old Year, the Old Mars, the Death, Winter, driven out before the incoming of the New Mars, the spring.

Not less transparent as a year-god is Anna Perenna, ‘Year-in year-out.’ The details of her festival have no special significance: Ovid<sup>5</sup> describes it as a rude drinking bout of the plebs; men and women revelled together, some in the open Campus Martius, others in rough huts made of stakes and branches; they sang and danced and prayed for as many years of life as they could drink cups of wine. It was just an ordinary New Year’s festival. Lydus<sup>6</sup> gives us the gist of it though he does not mention Anna Perenna. On the Ides of March he says there were public prayers that the coming year might be healthy.<sup>7</sup> The name Anna Perenna speaks for itself. Obviously Anna is the year, presumably the New Year, *Perenna*<sup>8</sup> is the year just passed through, the Old Year—*perannare*

<sup>1</sup> *Fasti*, iii. 259. Quis mihi nunc dicat, quare celestia Martis  
Arma ferant Salii, Mamuriumque canant?

<sup>2</sup> Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, 266, 297; Usener, *Italische Mythen*, in *Rhein. Mus.* 1875, p. 183; Frazer, *op. cit.*<sup>2</sup> vol. iii. pp. 122 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *De Mens.* iv. 49. ἤγετο δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπος περιβεβλημένος δοραῖς, καὶ τοῦτον ἔπαιον ῥάβδοις λεπταῖς ἐπιμήκεσι Μαμούριον αὐτὸν καλοῦντες.

<sup>4</sup> The reduplicated form Marmar occurs in the *Carmen Arvale* and from it Mamurius is probably formed, see Walde, *Lat. Etym. Wörterbuch.* s.v.; for Veturius as the old year, cf. Gk. *Fétos*.

<sup>5</sup> *Fasti*, iii. 523 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *De Mens.* loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> *De Mens.* iv. 49. καὶ εὐχαὶ δημόσιαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὕγεινόν γενέσθαι τὸν ἐνιαυτόν.

<sup>8</sup> Varro, *Sat. Menipp.* p. 506, ‘Fe Anna ac Peranna,’ and Macrobi. i. 12. 6, publice et privatim ad Annam Perennam sacrificatum itur ut annare et perannare commodum liceat.

is to live the year through—Anna Perenna was not two divinities but as it were a Janus with two faces, one looking back, one forward, Prorsa, Postverta. This comes out very clearly in a story told by Ovid,<sup>1</sup> a story that *may* reflect a bit of rustic ritual. Mars is about to marry; the wedding-day is come, he seeks his bride. Instead he finds old Anna (Anna Perenna) who has veiled her face and counterfeits the bride.<sup>2</sup> The young Year-god will wed the young Year-goddess, Anna; the old Year-goddess he cannot and will not wed. Anna Perenna is but the feminine equivalent of Mamurius Veturius.

Ovid<sup>3</sup> piles up conjectures as to who and what Anna was. Out of his rubbish heap we may pick up one priceless jewel:—

‘Some are there to whom Anna is the Moon,  
For with her months she fills the circling year.  
Some call her Themis, others call her Io.’

Luna, Themis (order), and the Inachian cow are of course all one and the same, the Moon as the Measurer and as the Hornèd Wanderer through the sky. Man measures time first by recurrent days and nights, then by recurrent Moons, then by the circle of the Sun’s year and its seasons, finally he tries to adjust his Sun Year to twelve Moon-months.<sup>4</sup> Eleven Moon-shields<sup>5</sup> counterfeit the one actual Moon-month. Broadly speaking Anna, though she cannot be said to *be* the Moon stands for the Moon-Year, Mamurius for the Sun-Year, and Anna is the earlier figure of the two.

This idea of Anna and Mamurius as Moon-Year and Sun-Year throws light on a curious Etruscan monument that has hitherto baffled explanation. In Fig. 7 we have a portion of the design from a Praenestine cista<sup>6</sup> now in the Berlin Museum. *Menerva* holds a young

<sup>1</sup> *Fasti*, iii. 695. Ovid recounts the story as aeteological,  
Inde ioci veteres obscaenaeque dicta canuntur.

<sup>2</sup> For the whole subject of May Brides and the False Bride, see Miss G. M. Godden, *Folklore*, iv. 1893, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 657.

Sunt quibus haec Luna est, quia mensibus impleat annum :  
Pars Themis, Inachiam pars putat esse bovem.

<sup>4</sup> The development among primitive peoples from weather-gods (e.g. thunder) to sun- and moon-gods, a sequence which appears to be regular, is well explained by E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, vol. i. pp. 491 ff.

<sup>5</sup> I am convinced that the twelve ancilia represent twelve moon-months, but the discussion would involve the kindred question of the Palladia and would exceed the space at my command.

<sup>6</sup> *Mon. d. Inst.* ix. Tav. 58. See Marx, *Ein neuer Ares Mythos*, *A.Z.* 43, 1885, p. 169.

boy over a vessel full of flaming fire, she seems to be anointing his lips. The boy is armed with spear and shield, and his name is inscribed *Mars*: the scene is one of triumph, for over *Menerva* floats a small winged Victory holding a taenia. The scene is one of great solemnity and significance, for on the rest of the design, not figured here, we have an influential assembly of gods, *Juno*, *Jonos*, *Mercuris*, *Hercle*, *Apolo*, *Leiber*.

If Mars were but the War-God, what sense is there in this baptism of fire? But for the young Sun what could be more significant? At the Sun-festivals of the solstice<sup>1</sup> to-day to feed the sun and kindle him anew



FIG. 7.—DESIGN FROM A PRAENESTINE CISTA IN BERLIN.

and speed his going, the *Johannisfeuer* is lighted year by year and the blazing wheel rolled down the hill.

The band of honeysuckle ornament that runs round the cista is oddly broken just at the point above the young Sun-god's head by the figure of the triple Kerberos. A strange apparition, but he ceases to be irrelevant when we remember that Hekate the Moon, to whom dogs were offered<sup>2</sup> at the crossways, was once a three-headed dog herself.

<sup>1</sup> H. Gaidoz, *Le Dieu Gaulois du Soleil et le Symbolisme de la Rome*, *Rev. Arch.* 1884, 32 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Blomfield, *Cerberus the Dog of Hades*, 1905. Cerberus gabalas the heavenly dog of the Veda was later translated to Hades. Cf. the fate of Ixion. For Hekate as dog, cf. Porph. *de Abstin.* iii. 17, ἡ δ' Ἐκάτη ταῦρος, κύων, λέαινα.

From the Salii we have learnt that the function of the armed dancers of Rome was to drive out the Old Year, the Old Mars, and bring in the New. Mars as a Year-God, like the Greek Ares, and indeed like almost every other male God, took on aspects of the Sun, Anna Perenna of the Moon. Can we trace in the Kouretes any like function?

(b) *The Young Sun-God and Zagreus.*

The design in Fig 8<sup>1</sup> is from a red-figured krater in the Louvre: Helios is rising from the sea. By an odd conjunction he has, to bear him on his way, both boat and quadriga. His horses are guided by Pan holding a quadruple torch. To the right hand stands a dancing Korybant



FIG. 8.—DESIGN FROM A KRATER IN THE LOUVRE.

or Koures, with shield and uplifted spear. In the chariot with Helios, again by an odd conjunction, as they cannot rise together, stands the horned Selene: clearly the vase-painter recognized that one function of the Kouretes was to clash his shield at the rising of the Sun, and, it may be at the rising of the Moon. In like fashion on another vase<sup>2</sup> a band of Satyrs dance to greet the rising Sun.

<sup>1</sup> *Annali d. Inst.* 1852, Pl. F. 3. Nonnus also makes the Korybantes dance at dawn, *op. cit.* 361.

ἤδη δ' ἔκλαγεν ὄρνις ἑώιος ἡέρα τέμνων,  
καὶ στίχες εὐπήληκες ἐρμονόμων Κορυβάντων  
Κνώσσιον ἐκρούσαντο σακέσπαλον ἄλμα χορείης  
ἵχνεσι μετρητοῖσιν.

<sup>2</sup> E. Gerhard, *Über die Lichtgottheiten*, Tav. i. 1.

The custom of greeting the rising sun with dances and the clash of instruments is world-wide. Lucian<sup>1</sup> says that the Indians when they rise at dawn worship Helios, and he adds that they do not, like the Greeks, account their devotion complete when they have kissed their hands, but they stand facing the east and greet the Helios by dancing, assuming certain attitudes in silence and imitating the dance of the god; the intent is obviously magical, man dances to reinforce his own emotion and activity; so does the sun; and man's dance has power to reinforce the strength of the rising sun. In Germany, Scandinavia, and England the belief is still current that on Easter Morning the sun dances and leaps three times for joy.<sup>2</sup> The Dawn with the Greeks had her dancing places.<sup>3</sup> In the light of such representations it is not surprising that the Korybantes should be called the children of Helios<sup>4</sup> and we understand why Julian<sup>5</sup> says 'Great Helios who is enthroned with the Mother is Korybas,' and again, 'the Mother of the gods allowed this minion of hers to leap about that he might resemble the sunbeams.' Rites often die down into children's games and Pollux<sup>6</sup> tells us that there was a game called 'Shine out Sun,' in which children made a din when a cloud covered the sun.

The notion of the young sun-god throws light on that perplexing figure Zagreus.<sup>7</sup> Zagreus is at the outset like Dionysos himself a thunder-child, offspring of the sky-god. We have already seen from the Hesiodic account (p. 321) that Zeus the child of Kronos is primarily a thunder-stone, his birth sets loose the thunder and lightning. The next stage is that the thunder-stone becomes a human child, but in token of his origin, the child is still obliged, inappropriately enough, to hold a thunder-stone.

<sup>1</sup> *De Salt.* 17. . . . ἀλλ' ἐκείνοι πρὸς τὴν ἀνατολὴν στάντες ὀρχήσῃ τὸν ἥλιον ἀσπάζονται σχηματίζοντες ἑαυτοὺς σιωπῇ καὶ μιμούμενοι τὴν χορείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>2</sup> See L. v. Schroeder, *Mimus und Mysticism*, p. 45, and Usener, *Pasparios* in *Rhein. Mus.* 1894, p. 464.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* xii. 4. ὄθι τ' Ἡοῦς ἡριγενείης  
οἰκία καὶ χοροὶ εἰσι καὶ ἀντολαὶ Ἡελίοιο.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, 202. . . . ὡς εἶπεν Κορύβαντες δαίμονες τινες Ἀθηνᾶς καὶ Ἡλίου παῖδες.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. v. 167. Κορύβας ὁ μέγας ἥλιος ὁ σύνθρονος τῇ Μητρί, and 168.

<sup>6</sup> ix. 123. Ἡ δὲ ἔξεχ', ὦ φίλ' ἥλιε, παιδιὰ, κρότον ἔχει τῶν παιδίων σὺν τῷ ἐπιβοήματι τούτῳ, δρόπαν νέφος ἐπιδράμη τὸν θεόν· ὄθεν καὶ Στράτις ἐν Φοινίσσαις,

εἶθ' ἥλιος μὲν πείθεται τοῖς παιδίοις,  
ὅταν λέγωσιν, ἔξεχ', ὦ φίλ' ἥλιε.

<sup>7</sup> The object of this paper is rather the study of the social institutions (initiation ceremonies) out of which mythological representations arose than of the mythological figures themselves, but some notion of the content of Zagreus is essential to the argument.

Nonnus<sup>1</sup> is never tired of insisting on how Zeus gave to Zagreus the thunderbolt to wield while he was yet a prattling babe. As attention is drawn less to weather-portents and more to the orderly phenomena of the sky, Zagreus becomes more sun- and year-god, less weather-god. As child he is the young sun reborn each day and like the young Mars, each spring. But he has also his mature shape as full-grown sky-god. Our earliest literary source, the *Alkmaeonis*<sup>2</sup> addresses him as correlative of Ge and as 'chief of all the gods.' Moreover like all sun- and sky- and year-gods, he is also a son of Hades,<sup>3</sup> he is the setting as well as the rising sun.<sup>4</sup>

*The Kouretes as 'Οργιοφάνται.*

The Kouros then as Young-Man expresses, and is to his worshippers, the Young Year, and as such has elements belonging to Sun and Moon, who rule and measure the Year. Sun and Moon and Year need their initiation ceremonies that they too may be young and strong and fertile. The hymn preserves, but only half consciously, some very primitive thinking. Most primitive of all is the ritual prescription 'leap' (*θόρε*): the Kouros is adjured to 'leap' for flocks and herds and ships. The conjunction of prayer, or rather adjuration, and ritual act is significant. Prayer is addressed to every Olympian and first and foremost to Zeus, but the injunction 'leap' lands us straight in the heart of primitive magic, and throws a flood of light on the characteristic rites of Kouretes and Korybantes, the *ὄργια*.

The Kouretes, an Orphic hymn<sup>5</sup> says, are *ὀργιοφάνται*, showers-forth, demonstrators of, orgies. The rites of Dionysos, of The Mother and of Demeter are constantly spoken of as *ὄργια*. What are *ὄργια*?

<sup>1</sup> x. 293. Bacchus reproaches Zeus with the favour shown to Zagreus,

Νηπιάχῳ μὲν ξείπεν ἐμὴ τροφὸς εἰσέτι 'Ρείῃ  
ὥς σιεροπὴν Ζαγρῇι πόρες, προτέρῳ Διονύσῳ  
εἰσέτι παππάζοντι.

<sup>2</sup> *Frsg.* Πότνια Γῆ, Ζαγρεῦ τε θεῶν πανυπέρτατε πάντων.

<sup>3</sup> Nauck, *frsg.* 228. Ζαγρεῦ τε νῦν με καὶ πολυξένῳ  
χαίρειν.

<sup>4</sup> There is abundant evidence of the worship of a primitive sun- and sky-god in Crete. For the Cretan sun-king Talos, Tan, Minotaur, and the solar labyrinth, see A. B. Cook, *Class. Rev.* 1903, p. 410.

<sup>5</sup> xxi. 5. μητρὸς ὀρειμανέος συνοπάονες ὀργιοφάνται.

Never had word so sad a downward history. The most exact scholars<sup>1</sup> think it no shame to translate *ὄργια* as orgies, a word which to us, connotes licentiousness; yet primitive orgies are of blameless and even virtuous origin. The whole gist is that they are as the name suggests, strenuous, they are rites of magical working. The savage promotes the fertility of flocks and fields by rites of dancing, he enacts in pantomime what he wishes done, he dances the desired deed. Such rites are *ὄργια*, strenuous from the outset. For Hesiod *ἐργα* are the tilled fields, and *ὄργια* are surely the magical rites that make tillage effectual. The associations that for us cluster round dancing are as misleading as is the modern connotation of orgy. Dancing suggests to us a laxity, a frivolity apt to border on license; Aeschylus<sup>2</sup> makes his chorus say, 'my heart is dancing with fear.' We comment on the poetical use of the verb *ὀρχεῖσθαι*, but the use is literal and simple. *ὀρχεῖσθαι* is not primarily to dance in measured steps for purposes of amusement, it is instinctive excited movement under the influence of strong emotion, it is the German *beben*.<sup>3</sup>

In the *orgies* of Demeter and Dionysos we have then the primitive magical *working* rites of initiation. These magical working rites gradually passed 'from Spell to Prayer,'<sup>4</sup> and as sacralization developed into gift-sacrifice, the vague collective *δαίμονες* blossomed into full-grown individualized *θεοί*. But the notion of *ὄργια* and *τελεταί*, workings and accomplishments, never wholly died out. They lived on in the various mysteries<sup>5</sup> and these mysteries, for all the pomp and prayer and praise and sacrifice to the Olympians, remained the kernel and the secret regenerating strength of the religious life of Greece.

JANE E. HARRISON.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Gilbert Murray alone protests. 'As for *ὄργια* it is not so much that "orgies" is an unfortunate word; it is that we most of us do not understand what "orgia" exactly were, and we wish to know. "Rites" or "things done" as opposed to "things said" would help us, but we need more.'

<sup>2</sup> *Choeph.* 167. *ὀρψείται δὲ καρδία φόβῳ.*

<sup>3</sup> Compare Altind. *rg'hājāti* which is used of the trembling and swaying of mountains at the birth of Indra. See Leo Meyer, *Handbuch der Deutschen Etymologie*, vol. 1, p. 574.

<sup>4</sup> See Mr. R. R. Marett's *Threshold of Religion*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> That the figure of the Koures actually survived in the Eleusinian mysteries we are told by Psellus, *Quaenam sunt Graecorum opiniones de daemonibus*, 3, καὶ Κορύβας ἄλλος καὶ Κούρης ἕτερος δαιμόνων μιμήματα. 'Ἐφ' οἷς ἡ Βαυβῶ κ.τ.λ. See my *Prolegomena*, p. 569.